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uit University Students?

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THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

The Seminar is composed of a number of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

It concerns itself with topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially United States Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces through its publication, STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that it publishes.

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CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR

Robert L. Bireley, S.J., teaches history at Loyola University, Chicago, IL (2001).

Richard A. Blake, S.J., is chairman of the Seminar and editor of STUDIES; he teaches film studies at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA (2002).

Claudio M. Burgaleta, S.J., is executive director of Estudios Pastorales para la Nueva Evangelización, in Oceanside, NY (2002).

Kevin Burke, S.J., teaches systematic theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, MA (2003).

Gregory C. Chisholm, S.J., is administrator of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, in South Los Angeles, CA (2003).

Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., directs the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Washington, DC (2001).

G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., teaches German language and literature at Georgetown University, Washington, DC (2001).

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., teaches theology at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA (2002).

Dennis C. Smolarski, S.J., teaches mathematics and computer science at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA (2003).

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Publication Office
Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits
3601 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108
(Tel. 314-977-7257; Fax 314-977-7263)
(E-mail ijs@slu.edu

Editorial Office
Faber House
102 College Road
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3841
(Tel. 617-552-0860; Fax 617-552-0925)
(E-mail flemingpb@bc.edu)

Christian Life Communities for Jesuit University Students?

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J.

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS
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The first word . . .

The "evil nun" has become a fixture in American Catholic mythology, according to Robert Orsi, a professor of the history of religion in America at Harvard and not to be confused with our own Les Orsy, the preeminent canonist at Georgetown. She reappears regularly in routines for stand-up comics who identify themselves as having been "raised Catholic" and even more regularly in tedious monologues delivered to expensive psychoanalysts by patients trying to figure out what they were raised as. According to the legend, she slapped us with brass-edged rulers, made us memorize Msgr. Muldoon's *Morbid Manual of Mortal Sins,* and filled our heads with stories of flying saints, bleeding statues, and terrible things that would happen to us in the afterlife if we dared giggle during the May crowning. She alone is held responsible for Catholic guilt, a malady that has great currency in an age grown scornful of ethical judgments about anything from genocide to reality television. The mythic character seems destined to achieve immortality in our collective psyche, according to Professor Orsi, as the parochial-school generation passes from the scene, and those who actually knew some nuns are replaced by Catholics whose familiarity is limited to *The Sound of Music* or Whoopi Goldberg's *Sister Act.* Untested by experience, the myth becomes the reality.

This image, however, like most myths, does have some roots in the truth. Strange adult women, floating several inches above the ground (they seemed not to have feet), dressed in ominous black habits, smelling of talcum and clicking with huge rosary beads, intimidated children. So did other uniformed authority figures like doctors, policemen, and baseball players. Most of us, however, eventually grow up, with or without doing hard time on the couch. And with adulthood we gain the ability to look back on our teachers with some semblance of objectivity, if we want to. (Many Catholics don't want to; the evil-nun thesis enables them to blame their problems on someone else.) If the practice caught on, many Broadway shows, comics, and psychoanalysts might be put out of business.

Although objectivity is not my strongest virtue, here's one reminiscence from a pre-Vatican II pupil who attended two huge parochial schools in Brooklyn. No, I wasn't thrown out—another personal myth cultivated by many now-"enlightened" Catholics to show they never really bought into the system. My family moved a mere two blocks, but parish boundaries were sacrosanct in those days, so in the middle of fourth grade, I moved from the School Sisters of Notre Dame to the Sisters of Charity of Halifax. Little really changed, however. In the Catholic culture of the period, going to the parish school and having a nun as teacher were presumed, and it

made little difference if the headgear was round, square, or pointed. Sister was sister. If the "evil nun" was stalking the corridors in either school, she never bothered me. The second school was huge. It had four sections for each grade, with between forty and fifty children in each section, and of course each was taught by a nun. Some were veterans and grandmotherly; some were 20-year-olds fresh from the novitiate and more terrified of us than we were of them; some were a bit cranky, but being locked up all day with forty ten-year-olds would be enough to wilt the starchiest wimple on occasion. But teach us they did: from arithmetic to the beginnings of algebra, from block capitals to cursive script, from diagramming sentences to composition, from reading exercises to literature.

Which brings me to Sister Frances, one of the truly great English teachers I encountered in what seemed at one time an endless (24–year) career of going to school. We parted company over fifty years ago when I left her eighth-grade classroom and went off to the Jesuits at Brooklyn Prep. After all these years, we still keep in touch, more or less, by an occasional note or Christmas card. This year, her card contained this message: "The Sisters of Charity are no longer in the convent at OLA [Our Lady of Angels], did you know? The Franciscan Brothers have it as a retirement residence."

A convent that once housed upwards of forty teaching sisters had become a retirement center for the brothers who lived in a house down the street and taught the boys in the upper grades several years after my graduation. Now they needed the space for retired brothers. The news should not have come as a shock, but it did. It's a story repeated with such monotonous regularity in parishes around the country that most of the time it passes almost without notice. When it hits one's own parish, however, it cuts a little deeper into the psyche. Here in Boston, the archdiocese has begun a process that will probably lead to closing and combining some parishes. The reaction in the local media holds true to the predictable pattern: Most people concede that restructuring is necessary because of changing demographics, fewer and older priests, and, as everyone in Boston knows, because of the financial pinch caused by settlements in the abuse scandals. Of course, adjustments should be made, all agree, but with the understanding that our parish or school will remain untouched.

This theme with variation has been played repeatedly in Jesuit circles over the past few years. It might be more accurate to say decades, beginning at the time when we accepted the fact that the precipitous drop in vocations was not a temporary downward tic in the fall-out from the 1960s and the council, but a dramatic reorientation of American Catholic culture. If you want an imaginary test of the extent of the change, try to picture the reaction of your favorite niece when her son comes home from Dartmouth and announces he has changed his mind about law school or the MBA and would like to become a Benedictine monk.

We'll leave it to sociologists to debate the etiology of the secularization that spread from Europe in the post-war period to North America in

the 1970s. In the meantime, we Jesuits go about our business trying to do our own restructuring of diminishing resources, fully aware that most of us harbor the belief and hope that the closings or transfers of responsibility to lay people will strike somewhere else, but not here in my parish, school, or retreat house. When the ax falls in our neighborhood, it hurts. Note the reference to Brooklyn Prep above.

The normal reactions—depression, anger, fear, and guilt—are not terribly productive, or terribly Christian. Or very imaginative. Perhaps this steady decline in active clergy may be God's way of telling us that we've reached a point in the maturing of the Church in the United States when the laity is ready to carry the burden of its ministry. Sociologist Peter McDonough has described this downsizing and handing-over as a form of "decolonialization," when the imperial powers prepare to depart by trying to leave some of their values and institutions behind to guide the newly independent peoples. That's a melancholy take on the process that is undeniably well underway. It implies that we lament the passing of a golden age—a Jesuit *raj,* as it were—and hope that the natives, when they take over, can prolong the afterglow of the sun setting on the empire. If this analysis is accurate, and I'm sure it contains more than a grain of truth, then it doesn't speak too well of us and our detachment from earthly achievement.

A distinction can be useful here. We have an institutional question and a spiritual one to deal with. Institutionally, we have done quite well in many instances in working with lay colleagues as peers, growing comfortable in our minority status and even accepting lay people in leadership positions. We can all point to successful programs for sharing the Ignatian charism, and we have been truly blessed with wonderful men and women who have come forward to fill roles once reserved to Jesuits. The spiritual question is whether we are altogether happy with this development or, in starker terms, or whether we are merely accommodating to an organizational inevitability. Do we embrace an age of lay men and women who help us live our faith and exercise ministry in a postclerical Church? Put in terms worthy of a fundamentalist: If God wanted a lot of priests and nuns, God would have provided them. Since God hasn't, then perhaps we might have to adjust to a redefinition of roles, humbly and gratefully rather than grudgingly. Maybe we should all go back to those expressions that seem so distant: "reading the signs of the times" or the Church defined as "the people of God." Parents can tell us how hard it is to "let go," but if the family is to prosper, the next generation must come into its own. And that's only one example of the spiritual wisdom we can gain from our lay companions in the faith.

As we grouse over our declining numbers, it might be good to reread the first paragraph of decree 13 of GC 34. In its discussion of the "Church of the Laity" in the next millennium, which by the way is now the present millennium, it cites *Lumen gentium* to good effect: "The Society of Jesus acknowledges as a grace of our day and a hope for the future that the laity 'take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the

Church in this great moment of history.'" The decree, it must be noted, is entitled "Cooperation with the Laity in Mission," not "Having the Laity Cooperate with Us." It envisions leadership in ministry undertaken by lay people as lay people, not as paperback Jesuits.

Leadership, whether clerical or lay, comes with a price tag. It demands preparation, dedication, and sacrifice. Tom Rausch's essay will help further our on-going conversation on this nest of questions about our relationship to changing patterns of Catholic ministry. Many of us belonged to school sodalities as students, and although we know that they reinvented themselves as "Christian Life Communities," we may have lost contact with them. These groups have a long affiliation with the Jesuits and for centuries helped lay men and women develop their own personal spirituality and commitment to ministry. In an age when lay Catholics are assuming greater responsibility for the work of the Church here and now, a look at the Christian Life Communities will be rewarding. Tom has pulled a great deal of material together for this monograph, but perhaps readers would like to add their own experiences and reflections in the form of letters for a subsequent issue.

A few second words . . .

- STUDIES is now a quarterly, for reasons we explained last September. Observant readers will have noticed that this issue is designated by "Spring" rather than "January." Paying subscribers, all three of them, will receive five issues for their last subscription, and then four. Inquiries should be directed to the business office in St. Louis.

- STUDIES has gone electronic. Current issues are now available on the website of the Jesuit Conference in Washington. Gradually, back issues will be added to the archive. We hope this will enable us to make this series available to a wider readership. To track our progress with the project, go to the Conference website (Jesuit.org) and follow the prompts through "Publications." Many thanks to Father Tom Widner and Marcus Bleech for getting us up and running.

- **The Jesuit Seminar** has been quite productive in the past months. Cambridge University Press has recently released Bob Bireley's new book, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War: Kings, Courts and Confessors.* The Liturgical Press has just published Tom Rausch's new book, *Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Christology.* Congratulations to the authors!

Richard A. Blake, S.J.
Editor

CONTENTS

Introduction 1
A Personal Reflection 4
The Origin of the Sodality Movement 5
The Medieval Confraternities 6
The Marian Congregations 9
First Period: 1540–1773 12
Second Period: 1773–1948 16
Third Period: 1964–1967 18
Fourth Period: 1967 to the Present 19
Christian Life Community' 20
From Marian Congregations to Christian Life Community 20
"General Principles" 22
Spirituality 22
Community 23
Mission 24
CLCs on the Campus 24
The Weekly Meeting 27
Typical Meetings 27
Respecting the Process 28
Student Comments 29
Challenges 30
Support or Faith-Sharing Group 30
Prayer and Ignatian Spirituality 31
Forming Student Guides 32
Attracting and Keeping Men 33
Membership 35
Christian Life Community and the Society of Jesus Today 35

NOTICE
TO OUR READERS

Beginning with this volume and this issue, STUDIES will appear **four** times a year instead of five times, as has been the case hitherto.

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., Ph.D. in religion from Duke University (1976), is the T. Marie Chilton Professor of Catholic Theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. A specialist in the areas of ecclesiology, ecumenism, and the theology of the priesthood, he has published 10 books and over 170 articles, book chapters, and reviews. From 1981 to 1985 Father Rausch served as director of Campus Ministry at LMU. In 1983–84 he was appointed by the Secretariat for Christian Unity as Catholic Tutor to the Ecumenical Institute, the World Council of Churches study center at Bossey, Switzerland. He was rector of the Jesuit community at Loyola Marymount from 1988 to 1994 and chair of the Department of Theological Studies from 1994 to 2002. His recent books include the award-winning *Catholicism at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (1996) and *Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Christology* (2004).

Christian Life Communities for Jesuit University Students?

Medieval confraternities have passed through several transformations through the centuries. One such organization was the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which had a long association with the Society of Jesus, surviving even during the Suppression. Now known as Christian Life Communities, these associations provide a form of spiritual growth for contemporary Catholics, but do they respond to the needs of today's university students?

Introduction

One of the phenomena of the last twenty-five years has been the emergence of small Christian communities. The *comunidades de base* or basic Christian communities (BCCs) of Latin America were perhaps the first expression of this impulse. Gathering neighbors regularly for prayer and reflection on the Bible, fellowship, and social outreach, the BCCs played an important role in the re-evangelization of Christians in Latin America.[1] In the 1970s and 1980s they were hailed as a new way of "being church."[2] A similar movement in the United States saw parishioners gathering

[1] See Alvaro Barreiro, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Evangelization of the Poor* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1982).

[2] Karl Rahner made this point in 1974 in *The Shape of the Church to Come* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 108–18; see also Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1986; first published in 1977); Julio de Santa Ana, "Schools of Sharing: Basic Ecclesial Communities," *The Ecumenical Review* 38 (1986): 381.

into small faith-sharing communities, many of them influenced by the RENEW movement. Some like Arthur Baranowski, a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, saw small communities as a way of restructuring parishes.[3]

Today the enthusiasm for BCCs seems to have diminished, and there are no signs that the parish as the local ecclesial community is going to wither away. Indeed, many parish communities are flourishing.[4] But it remains true that many Catholic Christians find their large parishes too impersonal, unable to meet their desire for a deeper sense of community and a more intimate experience of faith, and so many pastors and parish ministers are seeking to provide smaller faith-sharing groups within the larger parish community. According to Bernard Lee, there are minimally 37,000 small Christian communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Church in the United States, and somewhere between 75,000 and 1,000,000 adults and children involved.[5] These groups are known by different names—small Christian communities, small church communities, house churches, communities of faith, faith-sharing groups, and so on. But what they have in common is that these small Christian communities are "places where Catholics make Catholic meaning *together* from which they choose to live their lives."[6]

Lee's survey acknowledges that young adults were not found in significant numbers in the main body of small Christian communities studied, an issue addressed in an appendix.[7] When his researchers focused on college campuses with the help of the National Office of Catholic Campus Ministers in Dayton, they estimated that "there were somewhere between 540 and 900 SCCs on 160 to 250 college campuses" during the time of their study (1995–98), with somewhere between 14,580 and 24,300 students involved.[8]

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[3] Arthur Baranowski, *Creating Small Faith Communities: A Plan for Restructuring the Parish and Renewing Catholic Life* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988).

[4] See Paul Wilkes, *Excellent Catholic Parishes* (New York: Paulist, 2001).

[5] Bernard J. Lee, *The Catholic Experience of Small Christian Communities* (New York; Paulist, 2000), 74. On p. 164 Lee provides a list of organizations supporting small faith communities.

[6] Ibid., 6.

[7] William V. D'Antonio, "Appendix I: College and University Campus Communities," in Lee, *Catholic Experience*, 148.

[8] Ibid., 149.

Given the transitory character of university life, it is difficult to develop stable small Christian communities on college campuses. But many young adults and college students find a need for such groups, perhaps even more so than do adults. They often find it difficult to relate to their parish communities. As one young adult cited by D'Antonio commented, "Small faith communities make a difference because I come from a church that's enormous and the pastor doesn't know my name and will never know my name. My parents have switched back and forth between two parishes based on which one is more convenient to get to on Sunday morning. It's not a community."[9] This suggests that it is precisely community that many young adults are searching for. And they are looking for ways to explore their faith with their peers in a way that is not encouraged by the extroversion of campus life and the secular culture that surrounds them. Ironically, the Society of Jesus has sponsored such communities for young adults for over 400 years and they continue to flourish today, though not on the same scale as earlier.

In this essay I would like to look at the Jesuit-sponsored Christian Life Community, particularly among university students, as a contemporary movement with enormous potential in the Church. We will begin by looking at the prehistory of the Marian Congregations in the medieval confraternities and consider the rich history of the Sodality movement in the history of the Society of Jesus. From a more contemporary perspective, we will look at the transformation of the Marian Congregations into Christian Life Communities (CLCs). Then we will look more closely at CLCs and various challenges to their success on Jesuit university campuses. While some of these are flourishing, CLC in the United States has not generally generated the enthusiasm previously enjoyed by the Sodality. In the conclusion I'd like to raise some questions about the place of CLC in the contemporary Society, particularly in the United States.

If both retreats were strongly focused on the sixth commandment, they also communicated to us a sense of a loving and compassionate God.

[9] Ibid., 160.

A Personal Reflection

When I reflect on my first encounter with the Jesuits when I was a boy at Loyola High School in Los Angeles, my memories of how their spirituality impacted on me as a student are fuzzy and vague. We learned from the beginning to put AMDG at the top of our papers, and had a sense for the *magis* in that motto. We went to Mass as a class on First Fridays and had the opportunity for weekly confession. I was invited to take part in the Summer School of Catholic Action, the work of Father Daniel Lord, S.J. In my junior and senior years we went on a weekend retreat at a local Jesuit retreat house. If both retreats were strongly focused on the sixth commandment, they also communicated to us a sense of a loving and compassionate God. It was a liberating message.

And I was a member of the Sodality of Our Lady. Those memories too are dim. I remember that we were encouraged to a more active life of prayer and made some kind of probation. The emphasis was on devotion, not Ignatian spirituality. In an article on high-school sodalities during this period Tennant Wright, S.J., captures this lack of a clear focus: He remembers "that there were many members like myself, many who belonged to the Sodality in name only, who neither lived the Sodality way of life nor knew what it was all about. There were literally hundreds of us in this Sodality. But about the interior life, the lay apostolate—the backbone of Catholic Action—we knew virtually nothing."[10] Of course these were high-school sodalities.

Nor were these Jesuit confraternities, though they had their own character, something entirely new. They grew out of a movement that traced its roots back as far as the **Devotio Moderna** *in the fourteenth century.*

Two memories stand out from the shadows of the past with special clarity. One was a morning-meditation group in my junior year, led by a scholastic whose memory I venerate to this day. He was a veteran from World War II who carried in his face and body

[10] Tennant C. Wright, "The Sodality in America: 1957," *America*, November 2, 1957, 134.

the scars of his combat experience as well as other, less public wounds which later led him to leave the Society as a priest. In those happier days, he gathered us early before our first morning class and led us in guided meditations, using a popular little book called *My Daily Bread* by Anthony Paone, S.J. It was my first experience of contemplative prayer. The other was a Christmas food drive in my senior year sponsored by the sodalities at all our province high schools. I remember it as a wonderful time in my year when several of us, out of school for the morning, called on warehouses and truck depots in downtown Los Angeles begging damaged canned goods and returned to the campus with quite a haul for the collection. It was my introduction to the service of the poor that would become so important in Jesuit ministries. I know Sodality members at other province high schools taught catechism, visited the elderly in convalescent homes, and were involved in other forms of outreach.

When I moved on to Santa Clara University in 1959, I joined the Sodality there. Again the spirituality was mainly devotional; we were supposed to go to Mass and Communion frequently and had a sense that we were committing ourselves to a permanent way of life. For service we formed a *schola* to lead the congregation in song at the Sunday student Mass in those days before campus ministry. We were formally accepted with an act of consecration to Mary, receiving in a ceremony a medallion with the Sodality emblem, suspended from a blue ribbon. My fellow Sodality members and I knew that we were part of a larger movement, sponsored by the Jesuit fathers in their schools. But few of us were really aware that we were part of a movement whose roots went back to the very beginnings of the Society, just as I suspect few of those in our Christian Life Communities (CLCs) today, at least on the university level, are aware that they are part of a world community.

The Origin of the Sodality Movement

The first Marian Congregation was established by a young Belgian Jesuit, Father Jean Leunis, in 1563 in Rome, when he began to gather into a group some of the more outstanding students of the Roman College. John O'Malley, S.J., cites a letter from Rome to the whole Society (July 14, 1564) describing Leunis's group; it consisted of boys from the college in their early teens who under the patronage of the Virgin Mary pledged themselves to a number of exercises

of piety which included daily Mass, weekly confession, monthly Communion, a half-hour meditation each day, and a commitment to "serve to the poor." The Marian Congregation, the usual name, based on the Latin *congregatio,* or Sodality of Our Lady as it would be known in English-speaking countries, would be directed by "one of the Fathers" and would have a "prefect" elected from among the "older and wiser" boys.[11]

Leunis's congregation was not the first Jesuit congregation. That honor may go to Pierre Favre, who in 1539 or 1540 founded a "confraternity" in Parma that gathered both priests and laymen for a more intense life of prayer and works of charity. And there were others as well. Nor were these Jesuit confraternities, though they had their own character, something entirely new. They grew out of a movement that traced its roots back as far as the *Devotio Moderna* in the fourteenth century.

The Medieval Confraternities

This movement, influenced by a new emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and stressing the religious role of the individual, gathered lay people into voluntary associations or confraternities. Most were all-male groups, though some included women and others were exclusively for women. While the confraternities often included clerics or were entirely clerical in membership, from the beginning they offered to laypeople a way to live a more intense devotional life and to take an active part in the Church's ministry to the world, particularly to the poor.[12] In English they are referred to as fraternities, confraternities, sodalities, brotherhoods, and companies.[13] They should also be distinguished from the third orders

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[11] John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 197–98; we will use both names for the congregations.

[12] See, for example, Christopher F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Maureen Flynn, *Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400–1700* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); John Patrick Donnelly and Michael W. Maher, eds., *Confraternities and Catholic Reform,* in Italy, France, and Spain, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, vol. 44 (Kirksville, Mo.: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999).

[13] In Italian they were most commonly identified as *confraternità* and *compagnia* (Black, *Italian Confraternities,* 23); in n. 2 on that page, he observes that the 1917 Code

affiliated with the mendicant orders and with guilds, craft or trade associations that often had their own confraternities.

By the fourteenth century the Dominicans and Franciscans had extended confraternities throughout much of Italy and France, and they continued to grow in the fifteenth, particularly in Spain. Valladolid had at least 100 confraternities by the second half of the sixteenth century; Toledo 143, and Zamora with a much smaller population had 150. Florence had 75, Lyon 68, Lübeck in northern Europe had at least 67, and Hamburg at the beginning of the Reformation 99.[14] It has been estimated that "nearly every sizable village and parish throughout Italy had at least one confraternity."[15]

Nevertheless, for much of their history the medieval confraternities provided multiple opportunities for lay leadership and what we today call lay ministry, much of it taking place outside the parish structure.

The piety of confraternities played a major role in the development of the Church's devotional life in the late middle ages. In an era when parish priests were not required to say daily Mass, most celebrated only once or twice a week for their communities. "It was rather the confraternities, with their private oaths to observe masses on holidays and on the anniversaries of members' deaths, that had taken the initiative to institute and attend regular eucharistic celebrations."[16] Much of their piety came from their sponsoring religious orders. The Dominicans favored rosary confraternities and promoted Marian confraternities long before the Jesuits. The Franciscans promoted penitential confraternities in which members scourged themselves, sometimes in public, a practice that became especially popular in Spain. The Capuchins continued this tradition, but also encouraged Eucharistic devotion.

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of Canon Law distinguished between pious unions (established for works of charity), sodalities (constituted as organic bodies), and confraternities (organic bodies established for the increase of public worship).

[14] Flynn, *Sacred Charity*, 16–17.

[15] Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 50.

[16] Flynn, *Sacred Charity*, 117.

All the confraternities encouraged brotherhood and mutual solidarity. Some forbade suits against other members of the confraternity. Feast days were celebrated with special Masses and processions, often exhibiting the relics of their patron saints. At least once a year members gathered for a banquet or communal meal. They prayed for each other at Mass and took pains to be present at the deathbed of one of their members; they were required by their statutes to accompany the deceased to their place of burial carrying candles or wearing hooded robes. Noting that it was common to see hooded brothers escorting a body to the cemetery, Christopher Black calls attention to Filippo Lippi's *Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome and Dominic* and Bronzino's *Madonna and Child, St. John the Baptist, and St. Anne [or St. Elizabeth],* both of which show hooded figures involved in funerals.[17] Departed members were to be remembered in prayer and there was increasing attention to the souls in purgatory. Processions, elaborate plays, *sacre rappresentazioni* of the mysteries of the life of Jesus, and pilgrimages were among the more public manifestations of the confraternities' piety. In this way the confraternities played an important role in bringing popular religion into the institutional life of the Church.[18]

In an age when civic assistance to the disadvantaged was minimal, if present at all, the confraternities took on various ministries to the poor. The scarce resources of many fraternities meant that they were limited in the kind of aid they could offer; "[c]hildren, vulnerable females, whether young or old, and the sick" were preferred objects of charity.[19] Confraternities tried to provide dowries for poor girls, even those not related to confraternity members. Some ran refuges for at-risk women—the poor, deserted wives, prostitutes and their daughters—and orphanages for abandoned children. They contributed to the building and support of hospitals, sometimes sponsoring them or assisting as supervisors and part-time nurses. Some provided hospitality to pilgrims and travelers. Alms giving was always encouraged. Others specialized in helping prisoners or in burying those who died without resources. In this way the charitable works of the confraternities provided a safety net for the most vulnerable of society, though of course it was a limited one.

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[17] Black, *Italian Confraternities,* 105.

[18] Cf. Flynn, *Sacred Charity,* 5.

[19] Black, *Italian Confraternities,* 168.

By the time of the Reformation their zeal for the disadvantaged seems to have faded. In his "Appeal to the Ruling Class" of Germany, Luther called for abolishing confraternities, along with other ecclesiastical practices like celibacy, mendicancy, and festival days. Though he recognized that a fraternity might be dedicated to social relief, he argued, "At present . . . their privileges only lead to gluttony and drunkenness."[20] Nevertheless, for much of their history the medieval confraternities provided multiple opportunities for lay leadership and what we today call lay ministry, much of it taking place outside the parish structure. "In these voluntary associations, laymen and laywomen ministered to one another's needs, hired chaplains for strictly sacramental functions, and often organized themselves into centers for the poor and needy."[21] This was the world of lay involvement through confraternities that the Jesuits were to enter shortly after their founding and in some ways take over, particularly through their colleges.

The first sodality in North America (1653), the "Huron Sodality," was a gathering of Native Americans that included both men and women. Other Jesuit missionaries established sodalities in Japan, China, and among the Indians of Paraguay and Ecuador before the end of the sixteenth century.

The Marian Congregations

The Jesuits established relationships with existing confraternities from the earliest days of the Society.[22] The confraternity founded by Pierre Favre in Parma in 1539–40 was one of the

[20] Martin Luther, "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom," no. 23; See Martin Luther: *Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), 463. I am grateful to Robert L. Bireley, S.J., for bringing this to my attention.

[21] John O'Malley, "The Council of Trent in Ecumenical Perspective," *Seattle Theology and Ministry Review* 2 (2002): 58.

[22] O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 193.

first that was Jesuit initiated. Others followed, at Goa and Messina in 1552, in Valencia in 1554, and in Seville in 1555. Their members committed themselves to a rule of life *(vivendi formula)*, frequent Communion, and works of charity—assisting the poor, volunteering in hospitals, burying the dead. In Japan, *confrarías* were established shortly after the Jesuits arrived; in the long years of persecution and isolation they functioned as underground cells of Japanese Christians, sustaining their faith, while their leaders acted as lay pastors.[23] Initially Ignatius refused to allow Jesuits to serve as advisors to the confraternities, lest their mobility be compromised, though this was to change in the centuries that followed. This policy of encouraging lay leadership "also indicated that the Jesuits believed the laity fully capable of managing on their own."[24]

As the Jesuits began establishing colleges, the confraternity system, not new to universities, offered a tested means to organize and foster the spiritual life of their students. But it was Jan Leunis's "Marian Congregation," established at the Roman College in 1563 under the patronage of the Virgin Mary, which was to set the pattern for the future. Leunis encouraged his students to regular prayer, the sacraments of penance and Eucharist, and practical charity. He later established other Marian Congregations at Paris, Billom, Lyons, and Avignon.

From the beginning, the Marian Congregations represented a largely lay movement. According to Louis Paulussen, the early documents from the sixteenth century resemble more closely the teaching of Vatican II on the lay vocation in the Church than the rules of 1910, largely responsible for the typical image of the movement in the twentieth century.[25] Each Congregation has a "prefect" or president, a member of the group, as well as a Jesuit advisor, usually called simply "father" in the documents. It was only in the rules of 1910 that the word "director" was introduced, a move that in Paulussen's view was alien to the thinking of Leunis and Father

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[23] See Neil S. Fujita, *Japan's Encounter with Christianity: The Catholic Mission in Pre-modern Japan* (New York: Paulist, 1991), 168–71.

[24] O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 194.

[25] Louis Paulussen, S.J., "God Works like That: Origins of the Christian Life Community," *Progressio*, Supplement 14 (June 1979), 18.

General Claudio Aquaviva, who prepared the "Common Rules of 1587."[26]

Since the first Jesuits themselves had been university students, it is not surprising that their expanding network of colleges played an important role in the multiplication and spread of the Marian Congregations, though it was also true that a flourishing sodality often led to the establishment of a college or some other work. Graduates of Jesuit colleges established sodalities in Peru (1571) and Mexico (1574). By 1575 all the colleges of the University of Paris had sodalities, one of which chose Francis de Sales, then a student, as prefect. Edmund Campion founded one in the college at Prague in 1575, while Peter Canisius founded a sodality at the University of Ingolstadt in 1577 and another at Fribourg in 1582. By 1576 there were 30,000 students in sodalities at the Jesuit colleges of Europe.[27] Father Francis Coster, founder of the sodality at Cologne (1575), was to play a major role in the spread of the movement. As provincial of Cologne, he saw to the establishing of the sodality in all the colleges of his province: Mainz, Wurzburg, Spire, Heiligenstadt, Trier, Molsheim, Koblenz, and Paderborn. In 1597 Henry Fitz-Simon, missioned to Ireland at his own request, began establishing sodalities there. The first sodality in North America (1653), the "Huron Sodality," was a gathering of Native Americans that included both men and women.[28] Other Jesuit missionaries established sodalities in Japan, China, and among the Indians of Paraguay and Ecuador before the end of the sixteenth century.

When a lay prefect was chosen for the Congregation of the Annunciation in Antwerp in 1590, there was a "mini-revolution" on the part of the clergy.

In 1584 Pope Gregory XIII issued *Omnipotentis Dei,* a bull recognizing Leunis's Sodality in Rome as the Prima primaria, the Primary Congregation, to which other confraternities were to be

[26] Ibid, 18–19.

[27] William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 57.

[28] F. X. Talbot, "The Huron Sodality of 1653," *Woodstock Letters* 82, no. 4 (1953): 335–60; also Francis K. Drolet, *New Communities for Christians* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1972), 370.

"aggregated."[29] The Jesuits now had their own confraternity, first for students in their schools, and later for adults associated with their ministries. In 1587 Father General Aquaviva revised the "Common Rules" of the Prima primaria, which became the standard for all future congregations. The leadership of the congregations was now clericalized. Jesuits were to be their advisors, appointed by the superior of the college or house, without consultation with the congregation members.

Father Emile Villaret divided his history of the sodalities into three periods. First, from the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540 to its suppression in 1773; second, from the Suppression to 1948; and third, from 1948, marked by the publication of the apostolic constitution *Bis sæculari,* declaring the Sodality as "Catholic Action," what we would call today an expression of the lay apostolate.[30] To this we should add a fourth period, beginning in 1967 when the Sodalities of Our Lady were reconstituted as the Christian Life Community.

First Period: 1540–1773

The Marian Congregations were generally associations of men. These *sodales* (companions, associates) were originally mixed groups that included young and old, merchants and artisans, jurists and physicians, nobles and clerics. A military sodality in Paraguay consisted of soldiers of different ranks; prefects were usually sergeants major, though once a general was elected. Addressing one another as "brother" was common. These companions often worked together with the Jesuits as a team. But the apparent egalitarianism of the movement was not without its own problems. When a lay prefect was chosen for the Congregation of the Annunciation in Antwerp in 1590, there was a "mini-revolution" on the part of the clergy. As Chatellier asks, "How could the clergy be submitted to laymen in matters of piety and edification?"[31] Some of the first sodalities also

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[29] See Elder Mullan, "Documents," pt. 2 of *The Sodality of Our Lady: Studied in the Documents* (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1912), 5–11.

[30] Louis Paulussen, Introduction to *Abridged History of the Sodalities of Our Lady,* by Emile Villaret, trans. William J. Young (St. Louis, Mo.: The Queen's Work, 1957), 12–13; see Villaret's *Les Congregations mariales* (Paris: Beau Chesne, 1947).

[31] Louis Chatellier, "The Europe of the Devout," in *Le Livre de la Compaignie, c'est-à-dire les Cinq Livres des institutions chrestiennes, dressées pour l'usage de la Confrérie de la très-heureuse Vierge Marie, mis en français du latin de François Coster,* by François

included women. At Fribourg, Peter Canisius welcomed them, but later under Claudio Aquaviva, they were excluded and congregations of women were forbidden.[32] Thus, towards the end of the sixteenth century the social and sexual stratification of Europe began to reassert itself, with congregations dividing and reorganizing on the basis of profession and status, while congregations of women were no longer to be supported.

Particularly after 1587, when Pope Sixtus V exempted the Society from the canonical prohibition of several distinct sodalities in a single place, specialized sodalities began to multiply. Soon there were sodalities for working men, artisans, magistrates, gentlemen and nobles, merchants, even domestic servants, prisoners, and slaves. Beyond those for students in the colleges, many included those preparing for the priesthood, or were reserved for priests; in a period when the seminary system had not yet been fully established, these congregations helped to form priests in the spirit of the Council of Trent. Sodalities of lawyers took up legal assistance for the indigent. In Antwerp the artist Reubens served seventeen years as secretary of the Latin Sodality. Sodalities of nobles included members of the growing middle class, the clergy, and magistrates. A sodality at Dillingen included students from thirty-five different religious orders.

[The Marian Congregations] continued many of the social services of the medieval confraternities, volunteering in hospitals, caring for the sick, and visiting prisoners. They taught catechism and Christian doctrine to children and uninstructed adults and prepared them for the sacraments.

The Marian Congregations played an important part in the Counter-Reformation, combining works of piety with an active charity. Their members were encouraged to frequent reception of Communion and the sacrament of penance.[33] They continued many

Coster (Antwerp, 1599), 11.

[32] Ibid., 17.

[33] Michael W. Maher, "How the Jesuits Used Their Congregations to Promote Frequent Communion," in Donnelly and Maher, *Confraternities and Catholic Reform*, 75–95.

of the social services of the medieval confraternities, volunteering in hospitals, caring for the sick, and visiting prisoners. They taught catechism and Christian doctrine to children and uninstructed adults and prepared them for the sacraments. They labored to bring back to the Catholic Church those who had become Protestant, or to protect Catholics from Protestant harassment. One common work was bringing the poor to a special Mass; another was distributing tracts and books of piety. In England some lost their lives for this. Antwerp, once Protestant, again became Catholic. Congregation members assisted missionaries, particularly in Japan. Again, like their predecessors, they accompanied the dying and buried the dead.

Father Coster had much to do with developing the spirituality of the movement. His *Libellus Sodalitatis,* a guidebook written for his congregations, became the basis for a succession of handbooks down to the twentieth century. It includes the following act of consecration:

> Holy Mary Mother of God and Virgin, I . . . choose you today for Lady and Mistress, Patron and Advocate, and I order and propose with all my heart, never to forsake you, and never so to say or do that by my deeds anything should be done against your honour; I beseech you therefore most lovingly that it should please you to receive me as your perpetual servant, to assist me in all my actions, and not to abandon me at the hour of death. So be it.[34]

This practice of a consecration to the Blessed Virgin, not originally part of the rules, gradually became universal. As a minimum, sodalists were expected to make a weekly confession and monthly Communion. When festivals of Christ and our Lady, also Communion days, were added in, sodalists received Communion much more frequently than most Catholics of their time. Their piety appears to us today as overly legalistic, with its repetition of prayers, minute scheduling of time, cataloguing of good works, examination of sins, obsession with purity, and physical penances. Many sodalities adopted the long-established tradition of penitential processions, particularly during Holy Week. Father Villaret describes the students at Puy-en-Velay in France processing from church to church in the city, dressed only in hair-shirts or heavy cloths, their shoulders bare which they scourged until they bled. But there were also other,

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[34] Cited by Chatellier, "Europe of the Devout," 6.

more joyous occasions. In his book on the Jesuits, M. Gaetan Bernoville described the elaborate celebration of feast days:

> Those of the Sodality of the College of La Flèche were renowned: hymns, vespers, processions, high pontifical Masses, meetings and literary expositions, theatrical plays, pastorals, illuminations . . . succeeded each other for several days. In one of these processions 1,250 externs were counted, 250 boarders, 200 Sodalists with penants *[sic]*, banners, standards, followed by ecclesiastics and religious of different Orders, civic authorities to make, and preceded by a band to stir up 20 parishes.[35]

These celebrations sometimes got carried away. The provincial of Portugal outlawed horse races on feast days in 1618, while the provincial of Lyons tried to curtail the elaborate decorations of churches that required building elaborate scaffoldings reaching to the high church vaults.

For sodalists the day was to end with an examination of conscience, not unlike that of the Jesuits themselves. Father Coster outlined a five-step method, based on the *Spiritual Exercises:* thanking God for blessings received, prayer for a detestation of sins, minute examination of the day, prayer for pardon, and firm resolve to correct one's transgressions.[36] While the Spiritual Exercises were originally given only to priests and theologians, by the beginning of the seventeenth century they were being adapted for lay people and were soon a basic part of sodality life.

The very success of the Marian Congregations occasioned some criticism. The fact that sodalists frequently gathered in Jesuit chapels for liturgies rather than in their parish churches resulted in conflicts between the Jesuits and local ordinaries, particularly in France. While they provided social care for the poor and suffering, particularly the sick, prisoners, galley slaves, and prostitutes, it has sometimes been alleged that they were at least complicit with the move in the 1650s to confine the poor in general hospitals.[37] But in

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[35] Cited by Villaret, *Congregations mariales,* 49.

[36] Coster, *Livre de la Compaignie,* 104; cited by Chatellier, "Europe of the Devout," 35.

[37] See Chatellier, "Europe of the Devout," 133–38; on the confining of the poor, see Jean-Pierre Gutton, *La Société et les pauvres en Europe (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)*

responding to the needs of the most disadvantaged, they provided a network of social services that were otherwise not available.

Second Period: 1773–1948

By the first half of the eighteenth century a decline in the spirit of many of the congregations had set in. The causes were many. They included a loss of ardor on the part of members and the inability of the Society to provide enough dedicated directors as well as an increasing authoritarianism on the part of some of them. The enormous growth of sodalities, from 2,500 groups to 80,000, meant that they were becoming much more a mass movement of a largely symbolic piety rather than an elite movement of highly dedicated members. Other factors included tensions between the sodalities and parishes.

But it was the suppression of the order in 1773 that did the most damage to the congregations. Hostility from the courts of Spain, France, and Portugal had been growing in the years before the Suppression. In 1761 the Parlement in Paris suppressed the sodalities in the colleges within its jurisdiction, an action followed by other provincial parliaments, and in 1767 Ferdinand IV of Naples expelled the Jesuits and suppressed lay groups linked to them. On August 16, 1773, Pope Clement XIV's brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* was promulgated, suppressing the Society of Jesus. The brief left the Prima primaria without any canonical foundation, but it was not suppressed. On November 14, Clement promulgated another brief, *Commendatissimam,* restoring all the privileges of the Roman College, including its famous sodality. This meant that the movement of the Marian Congregations could continue, but without the guidance of the Jesuits. As Paulussen says, "From privileged Jesuit work, the *[Congregatio Mariana]* became one of the normal works of the universal Church. With one blow it was cut off from its original inspiration and at the same time exposed to inordinate growth."[38]

(Paris, 1947), 122–57.

[38] Paulussen, "God Works like That," 25.

Most damaging was the loss of the connection between the congregations and Ignatian spirituality. After 1773 the majority of them were established in parishes or dioceses, thus under episcopal sponsorship. According to Paulussen, only 5 percent of the groups were established in Jesuit houses.[39] Many prospered as pious associations. But without Jesuit leadership and federation, they had lost their primary identity.

The period from 1922 to 1948 is generally seen as a low point in the history of the Marian Congregations, but there were signs of new life.

The first sodality in the United States was established at Georgetown in 1810. The sodalities began to flourish anew after the restoration of the Society in 1814. But it took another decade before they began to reaffiliate with the Prima primaria in Rome. Though some were directed by Jesuits, the far-greater number were independent of the Society. Also in the period after 1824 an increasing number of women's sodalities, supported particularly by religious congregations of women, affiliated with the Prima primaria. Between 1839 and 1929, men's sodalities represented only about 23 percent of the total number. And the old Marian Congregations now had competition from new associations such as Frederick Ozanam's Societies of St. Vincent de Paul (1833), Adolf Kolping's *Gesellenvereine* (1845), the archconfraternity of St. Francis Xavier, and other expressions of nineteenth-century social Catholicism.[40]

The period from 1922 to 1948 is generally seen as a low point in the history of the Marian Congregations, but there were signs of new life. Much of the original spirit had been lost, but a significant step forward was made by Father General Wladimir Ledóchowski. To revitalize this traditional apostolate, he called representatives from all the provinces of the Society to Rome in May 1922 for a consultation. As a result he established a Central Secretariat for all the sodalities of the world. In a letter of January 25, 1925, establishing the secretariat, the General described its purpose as follows:

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[39] Ibid., 28.

[40] See Thomas Bokenkotter, *Church and Revolution: Catholics in the Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

> To sustain and help the sodalities directed by Jesuits, and by others who might wish to have recourse to them; to help in the forming of new sodalities; to be a center of information, to settle doubts and difficulties concerning government and activity; to be a connecting link and a mutual help in fastening the family ties between directors and between sodalities; and to encourage the exchange of news items.[41]

Thus, though it had no jurisdiction, the secretariat was to function as a service center for the worldwide Sodality movement.[42] This was a significant development. During roughly this same period, Pius XI was promoting the organization of lay apostolic activity under the title Catholic Action.

During this time widely diverse sodalities—of physicians and medical personnel, of schools of dentistry and pharmacy, of those permanently living in sanatariums and clinics, homes for the blind, for theater workers in Dublin, of fishermen on the coasts of Sicily, of military men in Brazil and the United States, and prisoners of war during the World War II—continued to affiliate with the Prima primaria.

Third Period: 1964–1967

Pope Pius XII sought to breathe new life into the sodality movement. His 1948 apostolic constitution *Bis sæculari* confirmed the privileges previous popes had bestowed on the sodalities, reaffirmed their Jesuit charism, the importance of the Spiritual Exercises, and their Marian character, and declared them a particular form of Catholic Action.[43] The Pope's call for a renewal of the movement generated a number of responses, both institutional and in the area of spirituality. They were to give new life to the movement and prepare the way for its ultimate transformation. Institutionally, 71 Jesuits from 40 countries gathered in Rome in 1950. In 1953 the World Federation of Marian Congregations was established, and world assemblies were held in 1954 (Rome), 1959 (Newark, New Jersey), and 1959 (Bombay).

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[41] Cited by Villaret, *Abridged History*, 159.

[42] This was the first secretariat for a Jesuit work. Today there are eight other such secretariats in the Curia.

[43] *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 40 (September 27, 1948): 393–402.

There was also a rediscovery of the Spiritual Exercises. In 1951, the sodality at John Carroll University in Cleveland sponsored an eight-day retreat for students and young professionals, something virtually unheard of in those days. In 1959 it offered a thirty-day retreat. Study and reflection on the Exercises in Europe, particularly through the work of Hugo Rahner, also contributed to a revival of Ignatian retreats.[44] One Cuban sodality, the Agrupación Católica Universitaria, founded by Spanish Jesuit Felipe Rey de Castro, began a new life in Miami after the exodus of Cubans to the United States in the 1960s. In the following years its members struggled to maintain their cultural traditions and particularly their emphasis on independent lay associations against the assimilationist efforts of the archdiocese to integrate them into the American model of parish-centered Catholicism. What resulted was an adaptation of Cuban Catholicism to a new environment. One of its present ministries is a residence for Latin American students studying at Miami's universities, a model common today in Spain where Jesuits run residences for both Catholic and state-university students.[45]

The spirituality of CLC is Christ centered (rather than Marian). It is nourished by Scripture, the liturgy, the Church's doctrinal tradition, and an attention to God's will as discerned through the events of our time.

Fourth Period: 1967 to the Present

Perhaps the most significant step was taken in 1967 at the Fourth Assembly of the World Federation of Marian Congregations in Rome. In an effort to update the movement in light of the Second Vatican Council, with its new emphasis on the place of the lay-person in the Church, the name was changed from the World Federation of Marian Congregations to Christian Life Communities. Far more than a change in name, the move really represented a rebirth or new beginning of the movement.

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[44] Paulussen, "God Works like That," 42–43.

[45] See José M. Hernández, "The Story of the ACU: How a Cuban Religious Organization Was Successfully Transplanted to the U.S.," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2003); for a description of the residential program, see http://www.acu-adsum.orc/miami/residencia.htm

Christian Life Communities

What led to the transformation of the Marian Congregations into Christian Life Communities? In his study of the spirituality of the Christian Life Communities, Bernard T. Owens, S.J., points to four factors that were influential. One was the *aggiornamento* brought about by the Second Vatican Council, particularly with its new theological understanding of the place and vocation of the layperson in Church and world. A second factor was the emphasis on issues of justice, peace, and liberation in the papal encyclicals and synod documents in the years following the council.

A third and particularly important factor was new emphasis on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius as the source of the spirituality for the CLCs. Josée Gsell attributes the renewal or birth of the CLCs to "the rediscovery of the original and specific orientation of [the sodalities], that is, the *Spiritual Exercises* as [the CLC] way to live out the Gospel."[46] And finally the new "Constitution" of the CLCs that resulted from the 1967 assembly reformulated the "Rules" of the Sodality as "General Principles": the "Rules" had become increasingly detailed and juridical in tone.[47]

From Marian Congregations to Christian Life Community

The best account available of the transformation is that of Louis Paulussen, a Dutch Jesuit who at Father General Janssens's request took over the Central Secretariat for the Marian Congregations in Rome in 1951.[48] The decisive step was taken in 1967 when the World Federation of Marian Congregations changed the name to a World Federation of Christian Life Communities.[49] The new name

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[46] Josée Gsell, "Implementation of the General Principles during the Last 12 Years, *Progressio* 2 (March 1979): 3.

[47] See Bernard J. Owens, S.J., "A Study of the Spirituality of the Lay Adult Members of the Christian Life Communities in the USA" (unpublished dissertation prepared for the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Cal.), 28–71. The "General Principles" and "Norms" can be found on the World CLC Website at www.cvx-clc.net

[48] Louis Paulussen, S.J., "God Works like That," 3–51.

[49] In some countries sodalities continue to exist, though under the supervision of dioceses or religious institutes and without any links to the Christian Life Community.

came spontaneously from the floor and quickly won approval from a majority of the delegates. It had never been used before, though a similar name, Groupes de Vie Chrétienne, had been adopted for the movement in France in the 1950s. Paulussen explains the reasons for the name change:

> If the image of the CM [Marian Congregations] suggests a reality which is so completely different from the best groups, which have renewed themselves in accordance with the original inspiration, then the name CM is no longer appropriate. It creates wrong ideas, misunderstanding and confusion. This name has become not a help or better service but an obstacle. It has to be changed, at least in those places where confusion is created.[50]

The assembly also proposed a new way of life, based not on "Rules" but on "General Principles." Though formulated in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the Central Secretariat in Rome had been in dialogue with the worldwide movement since 1959.[51] The "General Principles" were approved by the Holy See in 1968. In 1982, a general assembly at Providence, Rhode Island, changed the Federation into a World Christian Life Community.

Thus, the Christian Life Community is really a world body, made up of some sixty national communities (as of 1999), most of which have between 100 to 500 members.[52] But three national communities are exceptional: Madagascar with 18,000 members, India with over 20,000, and the Marian Congregation in Lebanon, which shares some common elements with CLC, with some 75,000 members. The national communities are often formed by regional communities that in turn are made up of smaller groups or communities of up to twelve members. In the United States, CLC is organized by regions, represented by the various provinces. Each province has an ecclesiastical assistant, a Jesuit responsible for the CLC within the province.

The CLC is a lay community, structured by the "General Principles" and governed by two international bodies. The General Assembly, meeting normally every five years, sets general policy.

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[50] Paulussen, "God Works like That," 46.

[51] Ibid., 43.

[52] Most national communities correspond to a given country, though in bilingual countries, such as Belgium and Canada, there is a national community for each language group.

The Executive Council, made up of three appointed members and seven elected members serving five-year terms, is responsible for the implementation of policy and for the ordinary government of the community.

"General Principles"

The "General Principles" (GP) of the Christian Life Community, confirmed again by the Holy See on December 3, 1990, expresses a vision of a way of life as a particular vocation in the Church, based on the spirituality of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. The origin of the movement in the groups of laypeople associated with the Jesuits since the earliest days of the Society is specifically acknowledged (GP 3). The charism of CLC is the desire of adult Christians "to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom" (GP 4). Jesuits often speak of the "three pillars" of the movement as spirituality, community, and mission.

Spirituality

The spirituality of CLC is Christ centered (rather than Marian). It is nourished by Scripture, the liturgy, the Church's doctrinal tradition, and an attention to God's will as discerned through the events of our time (GP 5), what Vatican II speaks of as "scrutinizing the signs of the times" (*Gaudium et spes,* 4). But pride of place is given to the *Exercises:* "Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality" (GP 5). The "General Norms" (GN) several times mentions the *Exercises,* stipulating that "[a]n experience of the complete Spiritual Exercises in one of their several forms . . . precedes a permanent commitment to Christian Life Community" (GN 4). It is the Jesus of the Exercises, a radically Ignatian Christology that shapes the spirituality of the CLC and its way of life:

> austere and simple, in solidarity with the poor and the outcasts of society, integrating contemplation and action, in all things living lives of love and service within the Church, always in a spirit of discern-

ment. This Ignatian Christology springs from the contemplation of the Incarnation where the mission of Jesus is revealed.[53]

But the spirituality of CLC is also ecclesial, concerned to work with the hierarchy and other Church leaders and expressing a willingness to go and to serve where the needs of the Church demand (GP 6).

Community

While a CLC member is presumed to be committed to the world CLC, practically, that commitment finds expression through a local community. These communities are freely chosen, centered in the Eucharist, bound together by a common commitment, a common way of life, and recognition of Mary as mother. Each is "a gathering of people in Christ, a cell of [Christ's] mystical body" (GP 7). For most members, the local community is the primary CLC experience. According to a document entitled *The CLC Charism* (2001), the characteristics of the CLC community are a "lived" commitment, a community in mission, a world community, and an ecclesial community (*Charism,* B). Particularly important is the notion that the CLC is a "community on mission or an apostolic community" (no. 143). After discerning a call or vocation to this community according to the CLC way of life, a candidate makes first a temporary commitment, understood as "the expression of a desire to live according to the CLC way of life (GN 39*a*). Ordinarily a temporary commitment is made after a period of time that should not last more than four years. The "General Norms" recommends a personal experience of the Exercises as a means towards making this commitment (GN I.2). At this stage the person making the temporary commitment tries to remain open to whatever his or her individual vocation might mean and to an Ignatian process of discerning the ultimate form it might take (*Charism,* nos. 179–85).

While the temporary commitment corresponds to the Call of the King and Election, a permanent commitment is related to the personal surrender in the Contemplation for Attaining Love and its Suscipe (*Charism,* no. 191). The commitment, which should be celebrated publicly, has a sacramental character (*Charism,* nos. 197–98).

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[53] *The CLC Charism* (revised December 2001), no. 20; the document can be found on the World CLC Website at www.cvx-clc.net

Mission

Finally, the CLC way of life is "essentially apostolic." The mission of those in CLC extends to both Church and world; it is identified with Christ's mission of bringing the good news to the poor, opening hearts to conversion, and struggling to change oppressive structures. Each member of CLC receives a personal call from God for a mission that is exercised through and supported by the community (GP 8). While the "General Principles" speaks of the mission extending to the Church and to the world, the emphasis is on the social-justice dimension of the CLC mission:

> The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelisation of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians. Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ. (GP 8, *d*)

This emphasis on justice and identification with the poor is spelled out in greater detail in another document entitled "Our Common Mission."[54] That mission is described as follows:

> Our personal relationship with God, which arises from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, is the inspiration, which fires us to participate in the struggle for a just world. We prize the church's prophetic stand against poverty itself and against all that causes poverty. Rooted in Christ and in his love for us, we want to make the option for the poor, not as an idea, but by making serious analysis and adopting a responsible and effective attitude towards poverty and its causes. (p. 2)

CLCs on the Campus

For many young adults today, their first experience of Christian Life Community comes through their becoming involved with a college or university CLC group, though a number of Jesuit high schools have CLC groups. They are attracted to these groups

[54] www.cvx-clc.net

because they offer a unique opportunity for them to share their own faith experience with their peers, to pray together, and to become acquainted with one another on a much deeper level. The group offers the students a chance to explore faith issues with one another in a safe environment. Their participation is voluntary, and the group process is both confidential and nonconfrontational. The local community helps them in their efforts to integrate their faith into their lives. Each group has a "guide," a spiritual leader or moderator for a student group, as well as a coordinator who sees to practical details.

It is difficult to get accurate information about how many CLCs for young adults are presently active on Jesuit campuses in the United States. Thus my report here is more anecdotal than comprehensive. In California, Santa Clara University has six CLC groups and the University of San Francisco four. Loyola Marymount University has perhaps the most successful program. As of fall 2003 there are 45 groups on campus, 25 led by adults, including a number of Jesuits, and 50 with undergraduate student guides. Some 401 students are involved, mostly undergraduate, though there is one graduate-student group and an alumni group being formed. There are also two adult CLCs guided by retired Jesuits in the community. The program is coordinated by the university's campus-ministry office, and a Jesuit is assigned full-time to the ministry. He meets once a month with the fifty student guides and has organized a number of other activities for the students involved in the program—Taizé prayer services during Lent, monthly discussions about opportunities and challenges for faith in daily life, movie nights, retreats, and special liturgies. The campus CLC groups are understood as "pre-communities" since they are not officially affiliated at the national or world level. Christian Life Community is really for adults and demands a permanent commitment. It is hoped that some older members will make a temporary commitment in the coming year.

> *"I have never had a deep personal friendship with a priest or leaders of the Church before this group. This has led me to have a better relationship with the Church through hearing his testimony and input."*

Boston College has had a CLC group sponsored by the Jesuit Community that has been meeting weekly (during the academic year) for almost ten years. Its membership has remained around 10 to 12 and is renewed each year as student members graduate. Meetings are student led and center on Ignatian prayer, Scripture reflection, usually on the readings of the day or the following Sunday, and other topics that the students are interested in, often drawn from current theological or Church issues. The group has no formal apostolic project and no formal training, but meets also for social and cultural events. A number of those who have been part of the community have been in vocational discernment programs; one is now a Jesuit novice and others are considering diocesan priesthood or Jesuit-related service projects. The group is unique in having primarily male members.

Boston College also sponsors ten other CLCs through the Department of Campus Ministry. Alongside of CLC, other "small faith community" experiences are part of the many campus-ministry service projects that bring students to places like Jamaica, El Salvador, or Appalachia. Each of these last-mentioned groups has extensive preparation for their various trips. Typically, a student going to one of these places will be meeting weekly for at least one full semester with the other members of his or her service-immersion trip and a faculty/staff advisor. They gather again on their return. These service-orientated, short-term "small faith communities" focus strongly on Ignatian spirituality. Thus, in many ways the essential elements of CLC—community building, faith sharing in an Ignatian context, delving into Scripture, and real concrete service—exist in these small groups that include quite a large number of students. Last spring, Boston College sent over 700 students on these alternative spring-break service-immersion trips.

Creighton University has ten student-led CLC groups with 50 members. Fordham has a group known as the "Faber CLC." The members range in age from mid-20s to 40. Some are married, some have children. They are very active and meet twice a month. Presently they are in the midst of the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat. Loyola University of New Orleans has about 26 members in 3 groups. Seattle University and St. Louis University also have CLC groups.

The Weekly Meeting

In my years as a guide for a student CLC group here at Loyola Marymount University, I have repeatedly been impressed with the honesty and spontaneity of the students in sharing their own faith and lives, their strengths and weaknesses. For many of them, the gathering of their local community is a cherished moment in their week. They bring all the creativity of the young to their weekly meeting, leading each other in guided meditations, talking about personal devotions, occasionally rising early to pray in the dawn on the nearby Pacific shore. Often a poem or popular song will be all that is needed for them to begin a conversation.

Typical Meetings

A typical meeting of a campus CLC group begins with a brief prayer, and then a "check-in," a few minutes given over to each member of the group for updating the others on moments of stress and grace, the lights and shadows of the past week. Then the one responsible for that particular meeting introduces the faith-sharing exercise for the evening. It might involve a Scripture reading, a guided meditation on a Gospel story, or a song or story presented by the leader. Carefully formulated "reflection questions" can help the members get in touch with their experience.[55] The final moments of the meeting are usually given over to "business," making sure leaders have volunteered for the next two sessions, announcements, community projects, and any other business. Some groups also include a brief reflection on

"It has helped me realize that the Church is the people and that despite what problems the institution faces, I should still stay close to the Church."

[55] Mark Link's small handbook, *Challenge 2000: A Daily Meditation Program Based on The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (Allen, Tex.: Tabor, 1993), offers many helpful questions for reflection, arranged with Scripture texts and a brief meditation.

their sense of how the meeting went. The meetings always close with another prayer.[56]

Some examples: Recently in my group the student leader for the evening had asked the members of the group the week before to choose a popular song that best symbolized themselves. When we met, each played their song on the sound system. One, whose song was the theme from the movie *Titanic*, "Never Let Go," spoke about how she had clung to her relationship with God through a number of crises in her life. Another used his song to explore his own feelings about going to Mass, and his struggle to replace the faith of his parents that he brought to the university with his own. A third shared her sorrow in not having a boy friend, and yet was confident that God would help her find the man that was right for her. At another meeting, the leader for the night brought rosaries for all the members of the group, explained how it was prayed—which was unknown to some—and then led the group in an extended recitation of the rosary with meditations on the passion.

Respecting the Process

If a group is to form a genuine community and function successfully, it is essential to respect the freedom of the participants and the confidentiality of the group process. A person freely chooses to share something of his or her experience and should be able do so on a level at which they are comfortable. There is no need to fill moments of silence. What is shared should be received respectfully; this is not a time for instruction or dialogue and never for contradicting another. While a person may choose not to share at a given moment, the success of the group requires that all be willing to participate actively, and to be open to the experience of the other members. Silence is an important part of the process. For honest sharing, confidentiality is essential.[57]

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[56] Lawrence L. Gooley, in his *To Share in the Life of Christ: Experiencing God in Everyday Life* (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1997), is very helpful, suggesting both topics and Scripture texts for CLC meetings. Also very helpful is *A Manual of Formation for Christian Life Community, Phase I* (Guelph: Office of English Canada CLC, Box 245, Guelph, Ontario N1H 6J9).

[57] Cf. Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 12.

Student Comments

To get some specific reaction, I gave a questionnaire to all our groups on campus. The students who responded (approximately 10 percent), both men and women, repeatedly remarked on how important the weekly CLC meeting was to them. According to one, "CLC is always one of the main highlights of my week. It takes me out of my daily business or worries. It gives me time to reflect on how much I've seen God in my life and in the people I interact with." Another said, "CLC is the best thing I have become involved in on campus. I know that CLC is a safe haven in which I can share my feelings, problems, and encounters with God." This same student commented on what getting to know her Jesuit guide on a more personal basis meant to her: "I have never had a deep personal friendship with a priest or leaders of the Church before this group. This has led me to have a better relationship with the Church through hearing his testimony and input." Another said that CLC gave her a newfound passion for God that caused her to become a theology minor.

He observes that it is very difficult for many groups to move beyond "the quasi-therapeutic functions of faith and psychological support of the members." They move to mission only with great difficulty.

The group process is important to the students. One remarked, "One of my favorite parts about CLC is how we take time to reflect on our day and how we see God throughout our day. Much of this reflection is done openly and shared with the group, but we also take time to reflect on our inner-personal thoughts." Another observed that shared prayer and reflection made her experience the Trinity in a more personal way: "The activities and prayers that we do in CLC are always thought-provoking. They have given me new ways to look at God, Jesus, and the Spirit. I can now differentiate my images of them. I see the Spirit as a force that moves me, and Jesus as a person I can relate to. I see God as a universal watcher, guide, and comforter."

A number noted that CLC helped them to relate more positively to the Church. One said: "CLC has allowed me to make my faith my own. It has helped me realize that the Church is the people

and that despite what problems the institution faces, I should still stay close to the Church." Another wrote: "Although I feel the Church as an institution has much to work on, I am comforted by open-minded Catholics who live out the spirit of Jesus' message. CLC has fostered a spirit of dialogue and it allows for different perspectives to be shared."

Challenges

University-level CLC groups offer a unique opportunity to introduce young people to Ignatian spirituality and the CLC way of life. But this does not happen automatically, and there are many challenges to ensuring that a university CLC can move to genuine experience of the CLC way of life.

Support or Faith-Sharing Group

For many students who at this stage in their lives are still working out issues of identity and intimacy, the weekly meeting functions as a support group where they can share personal concerns and get to know one another on a more intimate level. Bernard Lee's study of small Christian communities, which includes CLCs on Jesuit campuses, tends to confirm this. In the first appendix, William D'Antonio notes that while faith sharing was a major activity in most of the small Christian communities, only a small majority of campus groups engaged in it on a regular basis.[58] When asked what constituted the best part of their participation, 38 percent pointed to community and friendship; 30 percent to sharing and exchanging, 11 percent to learning about God, and 9 percent to spiritual growth.[59] The fact that CLCs provide personal support to students is important, but that is not enough by itself.

Thus, one challenge is to ensure that the weekly meeting becomes something more than simply a support group. John Milan has long been involved in CLC work in Canada and is a former member of the world CLC Executive Council, the group charged with the ordinary government of the CLC community. He observes that it

[58] Lee, *Catholic Experience*, 152.

[59] Ibid., 156.

is very difficult for many groups to move beyond "the quasi-therapeutic functions of faith and psychological support of the members." They move to mission only with great difficulty.[60] A campus CLC group should be more than a gathering of like-minded individuals. It should be understood as a cell of the worldwide Christian Life Community, what the "General Norms" refer to as a "local, pre-CLC community" (GN I. 1.a). Its purpose is to help its members come to know and assimilate the CLC way of life and to discern whether or not they have the desire to commit to it.

Prayer and Ignatian Spirituality

A second challenge is to encourage these young adults to the practice of regular prayer and, particularly, to introduce them to the spirituality of the Spiritual Exercises. For undergraduate students, Scripture is only one point of departure for reflection and personal sharing; popular music, poetry, and reflection questions seem to work just as well. The challenge is to help them to become more familiar with the Bible, to encounter it regularly as God's Word, and to use it in the prayer of the Exercises.

In the United States the enormous success of the Marian Congregations has not been equaled in our own time by the Christian Life Community movement, but CLC is much more vital in other parts of the world.

One way to address this is for the guide to work closely with the student leader in preparing the topic for each session. The guide can suggest themes, drawing on material from the Exercises and from Ignatian spirituality. Often it suffices to suggest a theme and let the student develop it. While young adults can be very creative in leading reflection sessions, a guide who suggests themes and considerations from the Exercises can gradually help the students become more familiar with the dynamics of Ignatian prayer. An appreciation of the First Principle and Foundation, the Kingdom of Christ, and Call of the King, basic principles of discernment, finding God in all things, using

[60] John P. Milan, "Formation of Lay Faith Communities," *The Way*, Supplement 62 (Summer 1988), 5.

Scripture imaginatively and other ways of praying in the Ignatian tradition, the "love is expressed in deeds" of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*—all these are themes that can be easily communicated through repetition in the group meetings.

Forming Student Guides

Because many university CLC programs are dependent on student guides, another challenge is forming the guides who have the skills necessary to lead a group. The guide's role has a number of important aspects. The first is to facilitate the group process, to ensure that members of the group develop the trust and confidence to share their own faith journeys with each other. Second, they should be familiar themselves with Ignatian spirituality and the CLC way of life so that they can help the members of the group grow in both areas. Finally, they should be themselves persons formed by prayer and Scripture. A successful CLC program is to a considerable extent dependent on having guides who are themselves carefully formed and prepared.

For example, in 1990 a CLC program was established at Stanford University at Palo Alto, California, when the Jesuit campus minister contacted a member of the National Youth and Young Adult Formation Team. After a series of initial meetings on the CLC way of life, four groups were formed. In November 1991 ten students attended the National Formation Meeting. Soon there were seven groups. Shane Martin, who was influential in starting the program at Stanford, attributes its success to its careful, on-going formation of the student leadership.[61] He notes that the Stanford CLC program was the first to feature student leaders of CLC groups, at least in such large numbers.[62] Unfortunately, it did not survive a change from Jesuit to Dominican leadership in the university campus-ministry office.

At LMU one of our graduate students developed a plan for the formation of student guides for her MA thesis. She argued that prospective guides should have completed at least one year as members of a CLC group and that they should be invited to consider

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[61] See Shane Martin, "Stanford University as a Model of CLC on College and University Campuses," *Progressio*, no. 3 (1992): 16.

[62] In a communication to the author.

becoming guides by someone in the CLC campus leadership. To help them discern whether or not they would like to serve as guides, she designed a mini-retreat, a two-and-a-half-hour session to introduce them through prayer and group interaction to the CLC formation process and role of the guide. The whole recruitment and discernment process should be under the supervision of campus ministry, and lead to a commission celebrated liturgically for the campus community early in the fall semester. She recommended that new guides find an opportunity to make the Spiritual Exercises in some form, and that they receive spiritual direction. Most importantly, the new guides should meet as a group on a weekly basis with one of the campus ministers to share their experience with their groups and to learn from each other.[63]

Attracting and Keeping Men

Another challenge is attracting and keeping male members in campus CLC communities. Many CLCs are heavily female in membership. At LMU, out of 45 groups, there are 281 women and 120 men members, a ratio of 3:1. While a significant number of male students join in their first year, their perseverance rate is much less than that of female students. Many males leave their CLC groups when they become involved with campus fraternities that seem much better able to meet their needs for close relationships with other men.

John Milan, long involved with CLCs in Canada and in Rome, suggests that part of the problem of keeping men involved may be the feminine character of much of contemporary spirituality. He argues that with Vatican II a shift occurred, from an emphasis on conformity to external rules and objective truth to a spirituality of intimacy with God, self, and others. The central symbol for this new spirituality is the interpersonal relationship. Such spirituality understands spiritual growth as a movement from isolation to intimacy. Its primary emphasis is on self-revelation, trust, emotional support, and affirmation. God is imagined as love, Jesus as a close personal friend,

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[63] Kristi L. Gonsalves, "Student Guide Formation for Christian Life Communities at Loyola Marymount University" (unpublished MA thesis presented at Loyola Marymount University, 1998).

and the Kingdom is identified with the establishment of community.[64] Milan characterizes such spirituality as having a "feminine-gender orientation." He argues that men, who are socialized in the goal-directed values of achievement, competition, and negotiation, are "simply not comfortable in a feminine-oriented spirituality." This may be why it is so difficult to attract and hold men in spiritual and communal formation programs, especially when they include men and women, and it may explain why they "are consistently in the minority" in most lay faith communities.[65]

Milan may overemphasize what he sees as the feminization of spirituality; indeed, some today would find his argument offensive. Young men today are also concerned about deeper relationships, more honest conversations, and shared values. The integration of their feminine side is an important point in their development. The call to follow Jesus in the Exercises presumes that one has come to an intimate knowledge and love of the one Ignatius calls Christ our Lord. But still Milan may have a point. Nor is he the only one concerned about an overemphasis on feminine spirituality. Without denying the importance of integrating the feminine, Richard Rohr argues that the modern Church is "swirling in the false feminine" which is "characterized by too much inwardness, preoccupation with relationships, a morass of unclarified feeling and endless self-protectiveness." He calls for an integration that would incorporate the values of a masculine spirituality, emphasizing "action over theory, service to the human community over religious discussion, speaking the truth over social graces and doing justice over looking nice."[66]

It is difficult to deny that much of our contemporary religious language and the vision of the good it supports lack the strong masculine imagery one finds in Ignatius and the *Spiritual Exercises.* The courtly, even military images, the sense of being involved in a great campaign with "Christ our supreme Captain," the challenge of the *magis,* the desire to be identified with Jesus in the Third Degree of Humility, to accomplish great things, even at personal cost—in short, the challenging images that appeal to the wild man, the warrior, and the lover who still dwell deep in the male psyche—are

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[64] Milan, "Formation of Lay Faith Communities," 6.

[65] Ibid., 7.

[66] Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *The Wild Man's Journey: Reflections on Male Spirituality* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1991), 222.

seldom to be found. Milan sees a spirituality that is understood primarily in affective and relational terms as tending towards the private and the interpersonal rather than the public. Even the Ignatian emphasis on love as expressed in deeds, "when interpreted in an interpersonal way, will tend to image deeds as private interpersonal kindness rather than the heroic action in the public world imaged in the Kingdom meditation."[67] One might ask, would such spirituality have drawn Francis Xavier out of his comfortable university lifestyle? Will it appeal to men today? Can it sustain an active apostolic life? Milan's argument is worth considering.

Membership

A final challenge is the question of who should be admitted. The current emphasis on inclusion and diversity can sometimes present a problem. Are CLCs sufficiently selective? Do they simply accept those who are looking for a supportive, affirming group, or do they seek to recruit those who can live the CLC vision or be potential leaders? Candidates should have a strong faith commitment. While a campus CLC group does not have to be restricted to Catholic students, the focus and spirituality of CLC is clearly Christian. Here the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) is suggestive. One of the key components in a successful JVC experience is the community in which the volunteers live. Some communities have not "worked" when those seeking some faith sharing and common prayer, even grace before meals, are frustrated by the presence of nominally religious members who are opposed to explicit signs of faith or religious commitment. Being selective does not necessarily mean violating the principle of inclusivity.

Christian Life Community and the Society of Jesus Today

In the United States the enormous success of the Marian Congregations has not been equaled in our own time by the Christian Life Community movement, but CLC is much more vital in other parts of the world. Present on five continents, it is an international

[67] Milan, "Formation of Lay Faith Communities," 7.

association of Christians, men and woman, young and old, united by their desire to work with Christ Jesus for the building of the Kingdom. In Europe, where Jesuit university presence is more often pastoral than academic, with Jesuits running dormitories, young-adult residences and student associations, a great deal of energy goes into CLC. In the United States there are flourishing Vietnamese, Korean, and Cuban CLC communities. Where there have been dedicated Jesuit leadership and institutional support in our colleges and universities, CLC has also flourished. But generally there has not been significant Jesuit investment in CLC in these institutions. Campus-ministry programs are often divided among the multiple programs and the diverse communities they seek to serve. Many do not have a staff member with full-time responsibilities for developing CLC groups. Some are opposed to CLC.

It may be that some older Jesuits today are less than enthusiastic about CLC because they continue to associate it with the Marian character of the sodality they remember from their own student days. Many are more open to other groups designed to facilitate faith sharing among adults, even though this remains a primary purpose of CLC. While college-level CLC groups represent "pre-communities," intended to prepare young people for an adult CLC commitment, there are a number of reasons why Jesuits in the United States might find these groups a rich resource. First, as a lay movement under Jesuit sponsorship and nourished by the spirituality of the Exercises, CLC offers one effective way of expressing the commitment to partnership with the laity called for by GC 34. Decree 13, "Cooperation with the Laity in Mission," notes that many lay persons "desire to be united with us through participation in apostolic associations of Ignatian inspiration" (no. 16).

Second, the fact that CLC combines community, spirituality, and mission should be attractive to many Jesuits today. The Society already sponsors a number of initiatives that seek to combine these elements. Consider, for example, the JVC (and the Jesuit International Volunteers), Nineteenth Annotation retreat groups, the various immersion trips sponsored by our colleges, universities, and even high schools, the emphasis on service learning and learning communities.[68]

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[68] For example, Loyola Marymount has a new initiative called P.L.A.C.E. Corps, standing for "Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education," which brings

Third, the communal dimension of college-level CLC groups is attractive to many undergraduates today who are seeking some experience of community to offset the individualism of their post-modern culture.

The challenge to the Society of Jesus in the United States is to determine whether or not it wants to take advantage of the Christian Life Community movement as an instrument with a rich heritage for promoting an Ignatian vision among those we serve, particularly in our institutions. The August 2003 Fourteenth General Assembly of the world CLC at Nairobi, Kenya, added an appendix to its report, calling for a deeper collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus. It asked for structures to facilitate better communication and support at the regional level and, particularly, for a clearer definition of the role of the Ecclesiastical Assistant, a Jesuit appointed for support of CLC on a national level, to be "developed by CLC working together with the Society of Jesus and especially current Ecclesiastical Assistants." But it is not clear that CLC is really a priority for us today, either as individuals or for the Society in the United States. Should we try to reclaim this rich tradition? Or should we be looking to something else?

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together recent graduates to earn a master's degree and teaching credentials while they teach in inner-city Catholic elementary or high schools and live in what are designed to be faith-filled communities. Santa Clara University has invested heavily in learning communities for its resident students.

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(For prices, see inside back cover.)

1/1 Sheets, *Profile of the Contemporary Jesuit* (Sept. 1969)
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2/1 Burke, *Institution and Person* (Feb. 1970)
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Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality
Faber House
102 College Road
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Fax: 617-552-0925
E-mail: fleminpb@bc.edu

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